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A PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.

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"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." — 2 COR. i. 12.

I HAVE longed, I confess, to gather you around me, and to address to you the very simple but profoundly serious remarks which I am about to make. I have desired to meet you to-day, not only on account of the gratification which I have experienced in former years in addressing you, and in meeting again my old catechumens, whom Paris life disperses, and does not permit me to see as often as I desire: I am influenced to-day by another motive. Certain writings have been distributed in great number,

* It is already known to our readers, that, within the last few months, M. Athanase Coquerel, Fils, has been suspended, by the Protestant Consistory at Paris, from preaching in the pulpit of the Church of the Oratoire, where he has officiated so acceptably for many years. The majority by which he was suspended was very small; and it is to be hoped, that, at the next election of delegates to the Consistory, a sufficient number of liberal members will be chosen to reverse this decision. Meanwhile, although he is debarred from preaching, M. Coquerel has not been prevented from printing; and he has already published several

even among you, from which it would appear that your pastor no longer believes what he has taught, — that he is no longer either a Christian or a Protestant.

If I saw before me to-day only my most recent catechumens, those who have listened to my religious instruction during these latter years, I should have nothing to say: I should call upon them to testify as to what I have taught; and their testimony would undoubtedly suffice for my complete justification.

But twenty years and more have passed since I began to give religious instruction; and my first catechumens, unless I have had frequent opportunities for conversation with them, might suppose that there is some truth in what has been published. I have a right to undeceive them.

I do not hope to show that I have changed in no respect in the space of twenty years. Sad, indeed, would be the ministry of a pastor, who, in twenty years of instruction and experience, had learned nothing; and who, after such a lapse of time, should find himself at the very point from which he started. A great English orator has said, "The only persons who never change their opinions are those who have none." Undoubtedly, upon this or that point, my views have been, and ought to have been, extended or modified, but in no respect in which the change affects Christianity itself. And I hope to convince you readily, that he who has been your pastor is no less a Christian nor

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discourses, a translation of one of which, delivered on the 10th of last April, we lay before our readers. Prefixed to the original pamphlet edition is a note, from which we learn that he has been in the habit, once a year, of calling together his different catechumens of both sexes and of all ages, to deliver to them a familiar exhortation, and to render an account of the labors of a charitable union which he has established among them, and which has for its motto, "Faith acting by Works." These annual gatherings are public; and it was at the last of them that the following discourse was delivered.

a Protestant than formerly; that he is to-day as much, and more than ever, Christian, Protestant, and liberal.

The words of St. Paul, which I have chosen from among many others analogous in meaning, and on which I could equally well have based my defence, have impressed me deeply.

"The testimony of our conscience," says the apostle, "that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." He says it to his disciples at Corinth: suffer me to say it to my catechumens at Paris, — "in simplicity and godly sincerity," or, according to a more exact translation, "in the sincerity and simplicity of God."

The simplicity of God! — this is one of those strange, unexpected, profound expressions which we occasionally find in the writings of St. Paul.

The things of God are indeed simple: what men add to them is obscure. If your Christianity comes from God, it will be infinitely more simple, and consequently more efficacious, more fruitful, more beneficent, than the Christianity of men, — of the makers of systems, of those who put theology in the place of religion.

The apostle adds, that he has not "walked according to fleshly wisdom." I do not need to apply these words to myself. If I had listened to that "fleshly wisdom," to that human sagacity, which consists in concealing what one thinks, and in saying what one does not believe, such an event as has recently taken place would never have occurred.

St. Paul says, finally, that he has spoken and taught according to the grace which God has given him. This is at once the simplest and the most forcible thing that the minister of the gospel can say in his defence. God gives

to each of us his grace, but differently, under forms and in degrees which it is impossible for others to appreciate. All, therefore, that can be demanded of any one, is that he make the best use of the grace which God gives him. I have taught you according to the grace which God has given me.

I. I do not wish to inquire if it is a very pious and benevolent work to seek to render a pastor suspected by those whom he has had the satisfaction of instructing in the gospel, and of bringing into the Church. I prefer to seek an excuse for this strange and lamentable misunderstanding. This is one.

Many persons admit, in religious matters, liberty of conscience just to the degree which they need for their personal and private use. Many persons demand that others shall be free to believe all that they believe; but, if a little more or a little less belief is required, they do not see the use of so much liberty: they demand that every one shall stop at the precise point where they themselves stop. I have never understood this sort of liberality.

I believe, on the contrary, that we ought to demand and to maintain liberty of conscience, not only for ourselves, our faith, our doctrines, our opinion, but for the opinion, the doctrines, or the faith, which are not ours. It has fallen to me to demand liberty, not only for the friends who think as I do, but also for other friends who think differently, and even for adversaries. I know not why one should argue with an opponent who is mute, disarmed, and who cannot defend himself. When one wrestles conscientiously before God, when one seeks nothing but the truth, he should desire his opponent to be free to bring forth all that is just and true in his opinions: then only will it be worth the trouble to refute him; then only we have before us something living, real, tangible.

From this manner of understanding liberty, it has resulted that even the opinions which I have refuted have been attributed to me. Those who have announced them might be deceived: I have tried to show them, that, in fact, they were deceived. But people suppose, that, if I have wished that these persons should have the liberty of saying what they thought, it is because I was deceived as they were. When the advocate of any cause demands free speech for the advocate on the opposite side, have we any right to believe that he abandons or betrays the side which he should defend? No: he will defend it, on the contrary, more worthily and more usefully, when he whom he ought to oppose has spoken according to his conscience, and according to the interests which he is charged with sustaining.

As for myself, I have not abandoned the good cause, — the cause of God, of the gospel, of religion, of Jesus Christ; and I wish briefly to remind you of the most essential parts of what I have said and taught.

II. In the first place, I have taught you to believe in God with all the strength of your soul: not in an inert, absent God, indifferent to his works, a stranger to his creatures, deaf to our prayers; not in the God of Pantheism, — that blind and obscure God, who, not knowing himself, is always seeking to find himself out, — that God in whom all is confounded, the evil as well as the good. I have tried to make known to you the personal and living God, the true God, Creator of the heavens and the earth. I have taught you to believe in that God, who, on the first page of Genesis, is so magnificently represented to us, saying, " Let there be light."

I have tried to make known to you that God, who, in the Old Testament, describes himself in these sublime

words, — beyond which we can never go, — "I am that I am," — that God, who, in the Old Testament again, gives to Moses and to the Jews this admirable precept: "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

I have tried to teach you to believe in the God of the prophets, who, with so much authority and grandeur, constantly revived in the Israelites the religious and moral sentiment, and recalled them to the work which man ought to do within himself.

I have tried to lead you to believe in the God of the Psalmist, — that God whom the sacred poet addressed with such fervid emotion, "Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy;" and near whom his ardent soul found so much moral energy, and such eminently religious power.

I have tried to show you God present in creation; and I have recalled to you the thought of St. Paul, when he says, "In him we live and move, and have our being;" God present in providence, governing the world, mingled without ceasing by his spirit, by his action, in every thing; finally, present in conscience, speaking within us. Our God is not so high in the heavens that we cannot find him. Our God is in the deepest place of our heart. Who seeks him will find him there.

Finally, I have tried to make known to you the God of Jesus Christ, who is our Father; who is not the God of vengeance, the terrible God of the Israelites, but the Father of us all, the Father of the prodigal son. Recall to your minds that admirable story, so vividly marked by the simplicity of God of which I just now spoke; that story in which there is so little of doctrine, and so much of religion; in which there is so much efficacy to sanctify, so much power to raise souls; that story in which the prodigal son, instructed and matured by misfortune, returns to his father;

and in which the father, who represents God, does not fear to compromise his majesty by running to meet his son when he is yet afar off: he presses him in his arms, and gives him the tenderest welcome, even filling his house with music and dancing, "because," he says, "my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

III. To go to God, to return to God, — this is religion. Thus I have presented it to you. Religion is the link between God and man: it is the sum of the relations which ought to exist between God and us. All which draws man near to God is religious. All which does not contribute directly to bring man into relation with God may be useful; but it is not the essence, the foundation, of religion. Thus the miracles are merely accessories. Religion, properly so called, I repeat, consists in placing one's self in contact, in relation, as much as is possible, with God. We have an infinite need of an ideal of perfection; but our ideal must not remain vague: a personal living God is necessary to us; and religion is a real relation with him, great as he is, and finite as we are.

IV. If we were innocent, if we had in us no moral evil, the word "religion" would be synonymous with a word which, to many minds, has no religious association, — the word "progress." If in us there were only good, progress and religion would be one and the same thing; all the faculties, all the forces, of the soul, would grow by constantly drawing near to God.

But it is necessary to go farther. It is not possible to delude one's self into the supposition that man is exempt from moral evil: man is a sinner. We find in ourselves not only isolated faults, committed at a precise moment or hour, but sin, moral evil, the tendency to evil. From this

esoteric and universal fact results the necessity of an elevation, of a transformation, which the gospel describes, in its magnificent language, under the most touching and the most expressive images. This is what it calls conversion; borrowing from the prophets the cry, "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions." "Turn unto the Lord your God." "Walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." "Depart from evil, and do good." "Draw nigh to God."

This, again, is what is offered us under the forcible and beautiful image of regeneration. Jesus speaks to the Jews, persuaded that heaven belongs to them by right of birth; and who, from the simple fact that they are sons of Abraham, think they have an hereditary right to eternal happiness. Jesus teaches them that they must recommence the spiritual life; that they must be born again; that it is not the birth of the body which makes the child of God, but that there is a spiritual birth, the commencement of the true life; that one must enter into the true way, — give one's self to God and to goodness.

And, moreover, we find always in the pages of Scripture the image of health. The sick man will perish: he must be cured. Who will save him? You know who.

Finally, we have, in our sacred books, met with the image of redemption. It is that of a slave bent under the yoke, who must be made free, who cannot deliver himself, help himself, break his chains. He must be made free: he needs a liberator. Who shall deliver him? You know who, — Jesus Christ.

V. Jesus Christ! I have reached the most essential point, — one more controverted in our time than any of which I have spoken.

In the first place, we must give some account of the work of the Saviour.

I have never, I confess, taught you the doctrines which are called "substitution," "vicarious satisfaction," "expiation by blood." I have not taught you, that we need, above all things, to be saved from punishment, — a doctrine which wants equally depth, moral worth, and truth. All punishment coming from God is a benefit: it is intended to improve. To be saved from punishment is not to be cured and to be made free: what man needs is to be saved from evil, from sin. As we have seen, Jesus, by his whole life, as by his death, by all his teachings, and by his example, by the influence which he exercised upon his contemporaries, and upon the men of future time, has communicated to humanity a new life: he has penetrated it with his spirit, he has animated it by his own life, and thus will never cease to nourish it. He impregnates it more and more with his sanctifying doctrine, and covers it, according to the words of the prophet, "as the waters cover the sea."

It is by this power that Jesus has saved the world. He has announced pardon; has manifested and assured it to man. He has given us the parable of the prodigal son. He has given the great revelation to man, that, because God is holy, he does not wish to destroy man, but to save and sanctify him; that, because God is holy, he does not delight in punishment, but punishes us to make us better, and to make men become what they ought to be.

Jesus has declared that he is the way; that is, the truth and the life. This way leads, you know where, — to God. The Christian religion consists in going to God through Jesus, who is its highest expression, not only because Jesus is one with the Father, but because he makes one with the Father those who live his life, — those whose thought and will are one with his.

This, then, is the work of Jesus. We come now to what relates to him personally.

VI. I have said to you nothing of Jesus which he has not said of himself. I have spoken to you of him as he himself has spoken. No one ever has cited, no one ever will cite, a single place in the Gospels, where Jesus has said, "I am God." But he has said, and repeated, that he is the Son of God.

I have never said to you, Jesus is God. I have continually said, and explained, that Jesus is the Son of God; that he is in the closest, holiest union with the Father; and that he had a right to say, "Whosoever has seen me has seen my Father also." Thus he leads us to the Father, so that through him we can draw near to God, as far as it is possible to humanity.

This union of the Saviour with the Father, this union of Christ with God, — we have seen and admired it with profound faith. The divine shines forth in Jesus. I have not said that Jesus was a great man, a great moralist, a Socrates superior to Socrates; or, to refer to that person to whom, in our days, he is most frequently compared, I have not said that Jesus was to us what Cakya-Mouni was to the people of India. I have said, that in Jesus we see, we recognize, we feel, the presence and the action of all that is divine. It is this which distinguishes him from all others. It is this which penetrates all our being when we study his words, when our souls are nourished by his soul; this which fills us with admiration, with gratitude, and with love; this which makes us recognize in him the true Mediator, who draws us to Him whom he called, after his resurrection, "his Father and our Father, his God and our God."

Man, we say, should go to God, should imitate God. If I gave you this precept alone, — which, nevertheless, is scriptural, — "Be ye followers of God, as dear children," you would perhaps reply, "The children are so feeble, the

Father is so great, that he is above our imitation; and we know not how to become like him, — how to translate into human actions the perfections, the sanctities, of God." It has been done. Jesus has done it for us. He has placed within our reach human examples, a life, a death, labors, and sentiments, in full accord with the divine holiness. There we find the model and the impulse which we need; there we find God brought near to us: what God is, and what he would have us to be, is shown in the life of Jesus, and in his death.

Behold the type, the model! and, as Pilate said, "Behold the man!"

VII. I do not say, "Behold the doctrine!" No person has less dogmatism than Jesus; and here appears an immense difference between him and even the greatest of those who taught after him. He goes to the depth of things far more than they who dogmatize. He awakens conscience. He takes hold of the inner man by the very roots of his being; and touches, vivifies, transforms, regenerates, quite otherwise than could be done by dogmatic deductions or by the complications of theology.

Jesus has set before us, plainly and precisely, what is essential in religion. He has said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." He added, that this is the fulfilment of the law, what is most important in our duty.

I am often astonished at hearing it said that it is not love which is essential, but this or that doctrine.

Jesus is right, or he is wrong. If he is wrong, and upon this important point, we are not Christians, and there is no reason why we should be Christians. But, if he is right, no man is authorized to oppose him, and to say, "Master,

thou art deceived. The essential thing is not to love God and our neighbor: it is to believe in such a way, to adopt such a dogmatic formula, to repeat without hesitation these or those theological deductions, very complicated and very abstract." Who could hold such language to Jesus? No one.

Let us, then, have the simplicity of which St. Paul speaks, — that simplicity which comes from God, and which consists in receiving from Jesus the assurance that love is the essential; that to love God and our neighbor is the foundation of religion; and that the law and the prophets (that is, every thing) is reduced to this.

It is thus that I have spoken to you of Jesus.

VIII. I am, nevertheless, accused of being unfaithful to him. Why? It is, in the first place, because, if Christ is misunderstood and poorly represented, I defend him with his own weapons, — mildness, persuasion, regard for conscientious convictions. Now, it is a characteristic feature of the times in which we live, that each man believes he shows so much more love for Jesus, so much more faith in him, as he more outrageously abuses those, who, as he thinks, misunderstand Christ. There has been for some time a sort of emulation between Catholics and Protestants, between bishops and ministers, as to who should use in public the most injurious epithets, or who should exhibit the most hostile manifestations of wrath, of hatred, of pretended scorn, for those who represent Jesus incorrectly. If Jesus were in the world, in the pulpit, in the midst of us, he would say to those who defend him thus, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are." He would say to them, that he does not wish to be loved with that bitter zeal. Those who have pleaded his cause with the most sweetness, charity, respect for the consciences of others, will be alone approved

by him, and not those who have shown the fiercest and most violent zeal.

I am accused, again, of being unfaithful to Jesus because I am not so much alarmed as others. It has been believed for some time, that a man is so much better Christian as he seems the more to fear seeing Christianity disappear, and Jesus conquered. Men speak as if Jesus was crucified anew; as if some new Judas betrayed him; as if Caiaphas and Pilate were condemning him to a new punishment.

I do not share this fear. I think I have more faith than they who are thus alarmed. For my part, when I hear certain persons say, "My Christ is in danger, my Saviour is threatened," I reply, "Your Christ, then, is not the Son of God; your Saviour, then, is not the true one." Let any one, if he can, overthrow mine. Let him make me fear that Jesus will disappear. It is not possible. I know too well that Jesus is the same to-day that he was yesterday, and that he will be to all eternity. I know too well that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Christ shall never pass away; and, as long as I have so much faith in my heart as I have now, it will not be possible for me to tremble, to utter cries of alarm, to terrify the faithful, and to preach a crusade against those who imperfectly represent Jesus.

I say even more. I would rather that Jesus should be poorly understood than that he should be neglected altogether. What I most fear is, lest a long time may come when the public mind is not occupied with discussions in regard to him. I would rather people should discuss whether a portrait is like him or not, even though some persons are mistaken, than that there should be indifference on this subject. We have seen periods in which people were not occupied with these considerations; in

which attention was wholly given to things of the moment, which seemed to them to be of more importance. I do not despair of my time, when I see that everywhere, in all countries, in all languages, people are discussing whether this or that image of Jesus is the true one. It is not without agitation that truth makes its way. God conducts it; and it would be doing an injury to truth and the gospel to partake these puerile terrors, so little conformed to the dignity and eternal power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

IX. These are essentially Protestant principles. When respect for opinions and toleration of persons reign, those who seek the truth find it, and discussion leads to good results. I repeat it, let us have faith in truth; let us believe it is given to those who seek it, and ask it of God. Let us have faith in conscience, in investigation, in aid from on high.

This leads me to say a few words, before closing, on the two great principles of Protestantism as I have preached it to you. One is the gospel; the other, liberty.

Of the gospel I have nothing new to say; and yet it contains every thing. I have not taught you, that, in the Scripture, each word is of the same value, of the same authority: I have taught you that there is an essential gradation to be understood and maintained between the different parts of the sacred collection. The Old Testament, which contains admirable and sublime words, is, after all, the religion of the Israelites, and not ours. Jesus says upon the mountain, and again repeats it, "You have heard that it was said by them of old time; . . . but I say unto you." And who had spoken to their fathers? Moses, the prophets, God upon Sinai. Nevertheless, Jesus adds, "But I say unto you," — because the teachings of Moses and the prophets were good for the Jews, were

adapted to their time, but are no longer sufficient for Christianity. Jesus brought much more. Let no one ask me to go back from Jesus to Moses and the prophets; for he has placed the truth in a much grander light, he has carried their own doctrine much farther, than the prophets and Moses could.

In Christian morality, is it possible that men wish to give to the words of the Old Testament the same authority as to those of the New? Is it possible to ascribe to the Psalmist the same authority as to Jesus? When, for instance, in the hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, after having described in admirable poetry the patriotic sadness of the captive Jews by the rivers of Babylon, the poet allows himself to be carried away by a savage desire for vengeance, and cries, "Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us! happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!" — I ask if it is possible to give to these words the same value as to those words of Jesus, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you"? No: the two texts cannot be placed in the same line. We must choose between them.

In the New Testament, the same difference is to be observed between Jesus and the apostles. St. Paul was a mighty genius, — one of the most remarkable men that the world has ever seen; and yet what an immeasurable distance between the lofty speech of Jesus, always full of the simplicity of God, and the language of the apostle, impetuous, eloquent, but often obscure, involved, less easily comprehended, and less rich! And as for the writings of St. Paul himself, who would wish to give to his praise of charity, — to that marvellous page, one of the finest that man can read, one of the most admirable of the entire New Testament, — who would wish to attribute to

that chapter the same degree of importance as to this or that difficult course of argument where St. Paul borrows of the Jewish Rabbis their custom of taking for a type some person of the Old Testament, and makes use of it to develop laborious comparisons between this person and Jesus? Or ought I to recall the words of St. Paul, giving counsel as to his health to Timothy, or asking that the mantle which he has left at Troas with Carpus should be brought to him?

It is evident that we must make a distinction. Those who deny it in principle do in practice just as we do. It would be better to recognize the fact, that there is gradation, inequality; to seek, above all, the truth in the thought of Jesus; and to put no other words in the same rank with his. It is important, then, to examine if that which a sacred personage says or writes is supported by what Jesus has said; if it is conformed to that; if it exists there; and if there is not infinitely more elevation and truth in the teaching of Jesus than in any such words of prophet or apostle.

In recognizing this gradation, do we confess that the gospel will perish in our hands; and that, in giving to the different parts of this sacred collection a diverse or proportionate value, we do not keep the faith? Certainly not. There reigns from the beginning to the end of the Bible, especially in the New Testament, but also in the Old, the great inspiration of God. We feel the Spirit from on high. This is, beside, the historical source at which it is always necessary to renew our faith; and, because we read the gospel with discernment, it does not follow that we do not seek and find the truth there. But man has no right to read the Bible with his eyes shut. Let us remember the English philosopher who said, "To make use of a revelation by giving up the exercise of one's reason is like taking

a telescope, and closing the eyes before approaching it; so that the instrument designed to increase the power of vision is good for nothing."

As for us, let us accept the truth of the gospel with an awakened conscience: and this is the last point upon which I shall insist; for conscience and its freedom is the second principle of Protestantism.

X. I will not dwell on this: we are dealing here with ideas which I have too often developed before you; and these, at least, are truths which I am not reproached for denying or misunderstanding.

Yes, conscience must be free: after having prayed, struggled, sought, a man must believe, not all that he wishes to, but all that he can. To pretend that one wishes to believe what one cannot believe; to say, like a famous doctor, "Credo quia absurdum," — is to surrender one's manhood; to give up the use of one's reason. It is saying, "I believe because I am wrong in believing." That is not possible: one may imagine, persuade himself, that he believes; but he is deceived. We do not wish to deceive ourselves: we wish to see things as they are. When we feel that a thing is absurd, we do not say, "I believe this because it is absurd:" we say, "I cannot believe it." But, if we struggle, if we seek, if we pray, the gospel is sufficient: we can find there all that our souls need.

Liberty of conscience is not an object of luxury; it is not a necessity merely of thinkers and scholars: we all need it. You should believe with your own conscience, and not with that of theologians. Liberty of conscience is not a historical and ancient thing which was useful three centuries ago, at the time of the Reformation, but which has done its work, and which we no longer need. We all need it every day. When we wish to be near to God, we

need conscience. Who dares take it from us? Who dares take the responsibility of placing himself between God and us? Who dares say to the spirit of God, "Thou shalt not breathe here"? "The wind bloweth where it listeth," says Jesus; "and we know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth." This wind of which he speaks is the breath of God, is the Spirit. No person has a right to assign its limits. When the wind blows from above, it passes over all human barriers. No one can prevent the Spirit of God from bearing witness with our spirits, and convincing us; and it matters little whether men permit or oppose it.

The Reformation is, then, a perpetual principle, constantly active. Our church is called "Reformed," not only because it was born three centuries ago, in a religious crisis which we call the "Reformation," — it is reformed because it constantly reforms itself; because it constantly renews itself at its source; because it is perpetually open to the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is in this respect that it merits its title of "Reformed" and "Protestant."

I will not repeat here at length that the world in our time seeks religion: we all see it. I will not stop to show that our age, which seeks to believe in the gospel, is not willing to believe by force, and will not believe without liberty. When people are thoroughly convinced that Protestantism means the gospel and liberty, nothing more and nothing less, a great part of the world and of France will be Protestant, whether it takes that name or not.

XI. These are, in a rapid summary, the principal instructions I have given. I affirm that they are Christian, and that they are Protestant. I affirm that those who deny it are self-deceived. Who shall judge between them and me? God, Jesus, the gospel. It has been said that what I teach is not Christianity, — is not the gospel of Jesus.

It is upon Jesus and his gospel that I depend for my justification, and for the proof that it is indeed what Jesus wills, and what the gospel teaches us.

It remains for me to recall to you two duties which result thence for you all.

In the first place, the duty of maintaining, intact and sovereign, liberty of conscience. Do not yield your conscience to any one. No one will answer for you to God. You yourselves must answer. You cannot say to him, "Lord, some authority has obliged me to believe this, to do that." God will reply to you, "I gave you a conscience: you should have used it." God will ask each of us what we have done with the conscience he has given us. Our liberty belongs to us because it comes from God. It is indispensable to us to submit ourselves to God. When God commands a thing, we have no right to listen to the man who commands another thing. We must remain free, that our ear may always be open to whatever comes from God.

The second duty incumbent on us, after having maintained firm and in all its force our liberal principle, is to prove to all that this principle is productive of an elevated morality, of exemplary vital piety, and of charity; to do much good; to testify in a thousand ways to the light that is in us; to honor the truth, and cause it to be always honored as God gives it to us; to be, in our lives, our devotion, our love, worthy witnesses of God and of Christ.

This is the duty of all. It is necessary to prove to the Church and the world that Liberal Christianity, as it has been preached, for example, by Channing in America, Samuel Vincent in France, Bunsen in Germany (I mention only the dead), — Liberal Christianity such as at this very time is beginning to be preached throughout England, — it is necessary to prove, I say, that this Liberal

Christianity is not, as is pretended, a philosophy, or a theology, but a religion; and not any religion whatsoever, but Christianity; and not any form whatever of Christianity, but its most legitimate form, — that which is purest and most fruitful for the future.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

A SMALL book with this title has recently been issued by Messrs. Gould & Lincoln, purporting to be the discovery, by a Unitarian, of the true character of Christ. The author's name is not given; and it is best that it should not be, since the book is not creditable either to his intellect, his good sense, or his integrity. It pretends to be the work of a Unitarian; and yet the author avers that he has renounced Unitarianism, and has become Orthodox. Such a falsehood upon the titlepage can only be a device to entrap unwary readers. In one sense, however, the title may pass as half true. What the writer represents as Orthodoxy, many Unitarians will, in its substance, recognize as their own faith. The creed to which his mental changes have brought him, does not, as he distinctly states its points, differ very much from the conservative type of Unitarian opinion. His Trinity, so far as it appears, is a Sabellian Trinity, explaining *persons* into functions, and distinguishing between persons in the *theological* sense and persons in the *common* sense. That he believes in the vicarious atonement, we have no evidence; nor is any such view of depravity and regeneration presented as we find in the Orthodox standards. He is not now, so far as this book represents his opinion, more Orthodox than many who are perfectly consistent in retaining their places

in Unitarian pulpits. It is surprising that such very mild Calvinism should have aroused that "rage" among his Unitarian hearers to which he more than once alludes.

But, whatever the present opinions of the writer may be, it is certain that he was not a Unitarian at all when he was occupying a Unitarian pulpit, and fulfilling the office of a Unitarian minister. The mental experience which he gives us is the experience of a sceptic, not of a believer. He entered the ministry without any established faith, — without any study for the profession. It is a humiliating confession, indeed, for a man to make, that he was willing to accept ordination as a Christian teacher, when he had not studied the Christian system, and had only "a rudimentary acquaintance with Christian morality;" only "the outlying principles of ethics." It must have been a "rudimentary morality" that could permit a man to take such a charge without conscious fitness for it, whose study had not been in the Bible, but in Carlyle, Emerson, and the "Westminster Review." He says that his preparation for the work of the Unitarian ministry was "general, rather than specific." It certainly was a very "general" preparation that consisted in not mastering any Christian ideas, and studying mainly the history of the Devil. That is not the usual method of our theological schools. By his own confession, this writer's mind was a chaos when he assumed the duties of the Christian ministry. We do not wonder, that, with such unfitness for the work, his ministry proved to be unstable and unsatisfactory.

The writer has a sort of pitying charity for Unitarians, though he is constrained to say that they are intensely bigoted and exclusive. He regrets any harsh words which in his irritation he may have said against his former friends in a volume of sermons to which he frequently

refers, and which he largely quotes. That volume, we imagine, is but little known to Unitarian readers. We do not remember to have heard it often mentioned, nor were its harsh words troublesome to Unitarian peace of mind. We trust, however, that such exhibitions as this volume contains will make the ministers of our faith more cautious in recognizing, as Christian preachers, men who have no faith, and no preparation for their work. This confession, "sad" enough, certainly, is to be taken only as the confession of a single individual. And even this is not to be received as final and complete. One who reviews in this way his mental history is always able to select those parts which he may wish to exhibit. These are to be supplemented by the judgments of others, who know him sometimes better than he knows himself. The accurate history of conversions from one sect to another usually shows mixed motives. It is not by any means logic or sentiment which exclusively brings these changes. Disappointment and failure, ambition, and calculation of chances, frequently enter into the account. The history of a convert is not satisfactory, unless the man himself is well known to his readers, — his tastes, his temperament, his tone of thought, and his standard of duty. An anonymous record of experience is no better than a romance. Any one may construct such a record. The book that we have noticed is safe in that respect. Some clew is given, so that the authorship may be discovered by those who have the inclination to follow it. But after reading the book itself, and observing the strange acknowledgments which it contains of superficial, "flippant," and "foolish" thought and expression, few will have any wish to find out the author. It is a signal instance of the evil which comes in a "random" preparation for the ministry.

HAND IN HAND WITH ANGELS.

[This poem will be new and interesting to many of our readers.]

HAND in hand with angels,
Through the world we go.
Brighter eyes are on us
Than we blind ones know;
Tenderer voices cheer us
Than we deaf will own:
Never, walking heavenward,
Can we walk alone.

Hand in hand with angels:
Some are out of sight,
Leading us, unknowing,
Into paths of light;
Some soft hands are covered
From our mortal clasp,
Soul in soul to hold us
With a firmer grasp.

Hand in hand with angels:
Some, alas! are prone;
Snowy wings, in falling,
All earth-stained have grown.
Help them, though polluted
And despised they lie:
Weaker is your soaring
When they cease to fly.

Hand in hand with angels,
Oft in menial guise,
By the same straight pathway
High and low must rise:
If we drop the fingers,
Toil-imbrowned and worn,
Then one link from heaven
From our life is torn.

Hand in hand with angels,
In the busy street,

By the winter hearth-fires,
Everywhere we meet:
Though unfledged and songless,
Birds of Paradise,
Heaven looks on us daily
Out of human eyes.

Hand in hand with angels,
Walking every day,
How the chain may brighten,
None of us can say;
Yet it doubtless reaches
From earth's lowest one
To the loftiest seraph
Standing near the throne.

Hand in hand with angels:
'Tis a twisted chain,
Winding heavenward, earthward,
Up and down again.
There's a painful jarring,
There's a clank of doubt,
If a heart grows heavy,
Or a heart's left out.

Hand in hand with angels:
Blessed so to be;
Helped are all the helpers;
Who give light shall see:
He who aids another
Blesses more than one;
Linking earth, he grapples
To the great white throne.

Hand in hand with angels
Ever let us go;
Clinging to the strong ones,
Drawing up the slow:
One electric love-stone,
Thrilling all with fire,
Soar we through vast ages,
Higher, ever higher.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS AGAIN.

Solomon did not anticipate the Sunday school when he declared that there was no new thing under the sun; and another novelty which could hardly have occurred to him, or to any other wise man, is a proposal of its discontinuance after half a century of substantial success.

It seems to us that our schools have suffered somewhat at the hands of that excessive self-criticism of which Unitarianism in general would long since have died but for the invulnerability and immortality of its truths themselves. A certain measure of discontent is a condition of effort and progress. Every thing that is established needs to be periodically examined as a safeguard against most ruinous decay. But in the extremity of our doubts, and the recklessness of our questionings, we have sometimes cut so deep as to endanger the great arteries of enthusiasm, besides just grazing the jugular vein of faith. We have stretched the limits of human responsibility so far as to leave scarcely a corner for divine operations. Instead of a background of calm trust in God's helpful care, we have too often presented a picture made up entirely of our own jaded wills, ridden by morbid consciences diligently plying their bloody spurs.

That the frog has his part to perform in the grand orchestra of Nature, let no one venture to deny; but we confess that he is by no means our favorite vocalist. Our preferences are altogether in favor of the skylark. We are lost by fear; "we are saved by hope." The author of "Intuitive Morals" reminds us, that, in "Pilgrim's Progress," Giant Despair sometimes, in *sunshiny weather*, fell into fits, and lost, for a time, the use of his hand. Accepting this reminder, and believing, from what we have seen,

that the Sunday-school teachers of New England have been blistered and bled often enough of late, we now propose to administer a slight tonic, as the only medicine suitable to the hour and the condition of the patients.

The children surely have not yet manifested any general scepticism with reference to this enterprise. Here and there, there may be an indisposition to attend; but, as a class, the pupils appear with an eagerness which challenges the best resources of all who look into their hungry and hopeful eyes. Instead of creeping like snails unwillingly to school, they would come bounding along the street but for the sedateness of step which becomes the day and the errand. Most prayers and sermons at church are so wanting in all the elements which interest children, that the school is their only chance to obtain the least public attention to their religious needs. To omit it would also be to deprive them of one of the best delights of the week.

The time assigned to the school is not sufficient to make the training and instruction received therein a full suit of armor for all the conflicts of the spiritual life; and therefore it is unfair to magnify the moral errors of every pupil, however imperfect his attendance, into an occasion of doubting that any benefit is derived. Fifty-two hours in a year is so short a season to learn what is good, and to unlearn what is evil, that to demand of it any completeness of education would be as unreasonable as the request of one who wished a very small Bible with very large print in it.

All teachers should feel and manifest a decided love for the young, and an earnest desire to be useful in developing aright the religious nature of children. To pretend to enjoy a task which is really irksome is a species of false pretences which is sure to be exposed. Every child is naturally a detective of the very first acuteness. He may

not be able to read between the lines of what you write; but he can hear between the sentences that you utter. Craving attention, he perceives and resents languor. On the other hand, the most genial and winning ways are of no avail unless consecrated to some serious purpose. A lack of moral earnestness, an undevout tendency, and a reluctance to view the errors and sins of the present life in their relations to future weal and woe, are all great, if not fatal, disqualifications of a Sunday-school teacher. They make the office merely nominal, and tempt to trivial uses of the most sacred and precious opportunities.

But when a genuine love for children, and an actual wish to undertake their religious education, can be secured, an ordinary outfit in other respects need not prevent any one from hoping to find a sphere of great usefulness in such a school. To be sure, all imaginable attainments would be heartily welcome; but it should ever be kept in view, that the rarest literary and scientific acquirements are, in this work, of secondary importance and value. A cultivated mind multiplies and varies the means and methods of instruction; but out of the heart are the chief issues of the Sunday-school teacher's life. Intellectual superiority, by itself, is morally and religiously impotent. The Greeks and Romans are said to have perished from a surfeit rather than a lack of knowledge. The ablest theologians are often the very worst preachers. Indeed, the ministry, devoted as it is to substantially a continuance of the work of the Sunday school, rests upon very similar foundations. There has been of late an acknowledged tendency to view the matter in a different light; and more has been made of a vigorous and shining intellect than of humane and devout affections. Thus the pulpit has sometimes been entered by those, who, in a self-seeking spirit, have undertaken to dazzle and attract. But such suc-

cesses have been transient. The inexorable demands of the calling molest and make afraid all save the earnest and the true. Brilliant scholars often retire from a post which exacts what they have not to give. Showy men run their brief career, to end in the laying-aside or the tearing-off of the glittering masks. Fair abilities, used by a sanctified will, seldom fail to tell in the long-run of the profession. Of this we have had recently a most striking instance. It is universally conceded that the marked man of Anniversary Week, whose presence was most impressive, and whose words were most weighty, came from a region where his residence implies a comparatively moderate devotion to purely intellectual pursuits; yet his unfaltering courage, his cheerful sacrifices, his indomitable will, his unreserved concentration and dedication of every atom of strength of body, mind, and soul, to Christian work, have caused all to regard him as the peerless pastor of our time and country. Rooted in the respect, and laden with the gratitude, and borne reverently in the hearts, of all loyal and God-fearing men, he is to-day armed with a personal influence seldom bestowed upon any man. And his character is his stronghold. It is his sceptre at home and abroad. It wins the homage of the learned, excites the covetousness of every platform that would sway the people, and imparts to his very face a more than mortal beauty. Another true man in Central New York, "whose voice God made on purpose to pronounce the beatitudes," and whose great heart is given to every good cause, however feeble and unpopular it may be, ventured to say something about giving way to some younger successor; and his people replied, "We would rather have you sit in the pulpit, and merely smile at us, than to listen to the brightest youth, fresh from a divinity school, with an entirely new system of theology in his very first sermon."

Furnish an earnestness in holy purposes at all akin to that which we have described, and you give a Sunday-school teacher who will sooner or later be amply equipped for every good word and work. Remember that we insist upon keeping our eyes single to the end and aim of this enterprise in thus almost slighting all that is not distinctly tributary to it. In choosing a sailor, you would hardly value his acquaintance with farming. Your physician's acceptableness does not at all depend upon his knowledge or his ignorance of the history of Nineveh. In a Western city, there was a learned barber, owner of one of the largest private libraries in the place, whose delight it was to discourse of Aristotle and Plato to every customer, who, by the most liberal imputation, could be suspected of philosophical tastes. But, alas! the philosophers often forsook him for an unlettered rival more expert with scissors.

Manuals may be improved; but, after all, they are overrated, when it is supposed that the schools are kept back by waiting for such reforms. Manuals are merely the trellis-work for the vine of original teaching to grow upon. Without inventive talents in the teacher, the new ones will be as fruitless as the old ones. They may yield particles of oak instead of basswood; but there is little choice in the kinds of sawdust.

In the communion of heart with heart, which is the very essence of Sunday-school intercourse, labor-saving inventions are of small account. Even if they were ever so valuable, they would be obtained independently of the publishers. Love is more ingenious than any Yankee. Its inventions have never been accumulated after the style of the Patent-Office collection; but its engines and instruments are sure to prosper. When baffled, it cannot sleep until the clew is found to guide its pilgrim through any labyrinth that ends in a human soul. Too many of our

surgeons trust more to their improved instruments than to increased accuracy of observation, and skilfulness of touch. Steam has done little to improve the race of sailors. Mr. Beecher struck far and near when he anticipated the objections to his calling Dr. Furness "an excellent practical Christian," by saying that some men could turn out better work with a jack-knife than others could make with a whole chest of tools.

Go back in memory to the days of your own pupilage, and recall the dear teacher for whom each year of life brings additional veneration, and how little you remember of her methods of instruction! Was it not something very different which made the deepest, the most abiding impression upon you? — the cordial welcome to your place at school; the kind inquiries for some sick one you had left at home; the pleasant visits under your own roof; the chance greetings by the wayside on some week-day. In speaking of God, did she not give you your first full appreciation of the earthly father, then fading from your sight perhaps? or make you know your loss in the fond mother who left you for the skies? Was not the right more righteous, and the truth truer, and love more lovely, because they were the precepts of her friendly lips? Were not her smiles of approval better than her capital stories? her look of regret, when you were late or impatient or listless, worse than a blow from the fist of a man? And did not all these gentle influences conspire to make you place in her hand the very helm of your character, in the hope, that, with such a pilot, you might reach the heavenly shore? Such as these are the triumphs of the best teachers, — far superior to the acquisition of volumes of biblical lore, and a smattering of physical sciences. And, in this struggle for success, no true and earnest heart that perseveres need fear defeat; for a child's soul is a castle that is

easily taken, when fairly besieged by the armies of affection. When the summons to surrender is from the voice of love, gates fly open of themselves, and walls fall prostrate of their own accord.

So great is our faith in the power of character over the young, that we always lament the failure to visit the school, at least occasionally; which is a sin of omission committed by too many otherwise very estimable men and women. It is allowing a vast influence for good to rust in them unused. The work belongs mainly to the young; but it may well be shared sometimes by the most advanced in years. Few sights are more beautiful than a mother taking her daughter's class for several Sundays in case of the latter's absence or sickness, and a father appearing in the stead of his son. The process of instruction may be hindered somewhat by the change, and it may not; but, if it were as good as stopped for the time, more inestimable advantages arise out of the temporary relation. Some old persons should be retained in every school, if possible. If a venerable man in Concord, Mass., who kept his class to the end of his days, had no other reward than the preserved faith in man of old pupils in the West, who, when tempted to say, in their haste, "All men are liars," always except "Squire Hoar," and take courage, he did not teach in vain.

Do you say, in your modesty, "But I am not very good"? we answer, There is no telling; and, if you were very good, you would hardly know it. Real saints are the very last persons in the world to suspect themselves of sanctity. But granting that you are not yet a saint (probably a safe concession): if you have a disinterested and self-sacrificing love for the young, you may depend upon it that some of them have seen a light in your face that no mirror ever reflected, and have heard tones in your voice

that no art could enable you to reproduce. It was said of a celebrated French scholar, "He pleases everybody, because he does not please himself."

In view of the condition of our country at the present time, we ought to consecrate ourselves anew to the service of this noble cause. The question, "Are we to have any more Sunday schools?" could not have been asked in any land or age when it would have been more signally without pertinence. The war is constantly taking away the consummate flower of American manhood. If it continues, we shall soon be fearfully stripped of our bravest and our best. There is scarcely a home where at least one great vacancy does not seem to declare, —

> "A star hath left the kindling sky, —
> A lovely Northern light:
> Many a planet is on high;
> But that hath left the night."

We cannot look upon the thinned ranks of any returning regiment without remembering —

> "The brave hearts that never more may beat,
> The eyes that smile no more, the unreturning feet."

Nor are these all our losses. The last year has drawn heavily upon the ranks of our liberal clergy. Several of the summoned have been our ablest young men, called before they reached the fulness of their manly promise. Now, how are these losses in camp and pulpit to be repaired? How is this immense moral deprivation ever to be made good? There is but one answer: By tasking to their very utmost all the means of training the young to a supreme regard for righteousness, liberty, and truth. The eye of God may perceive other ways of providing the heroes and prophets which our future will so sorely need; but such ways are indeed past finding out by the vision of man. A new generation may grow up before the conflict

ends. On account of our lukewarmness, we fear, that, even in heaven, there is anxious unrest in the hearts of the faithful unto death. If we could hear the voices of the noble army of martyrs slain in the highest places of our Israel, every one of them would cry to us, "There is no peace for me while the great war against accursed wrong is not finished aright. If you care for my satisfaction and my joy, let me see, that, though thousands of successors fall in my place of duty, it will yet be true, that —

> 'Another hand my sword shall wield,
> Another hand the standard wave,
> Till from the trumpet's mouth is pealed
> The blast of triumph o'er my grave.'"

With a solemn sense of the responsibilities of the hour, let us toil on with faith and hope in these gardens of God. There is much to encourage us. Our modes of Christian nurture have not been found wanting in grand results. *The education of Starr King was liberal in root and stem and branch and blossom.* Why may not the same trees bear other fruits as fair and luscious? They are already planted. Let us water in trust and love; never doubting, that, in his own good time, God will give the desired increase.

INDIA MISSION. — LETTER FROM MR. DALL.

Unitarian Mission House, Calcutta, May 8, 1864.

Dear Brother Winkley, — We are now at our season of intensest heat. Still we work on and on. Happily, the work of a missionary, in a teeming centre of population and intelligent activity like Calcutta, is not one of much personal exposure. If he take proper care, he need not fall under sunstroke, nor breathe cholera and plague. He may

give his every waking moment to his work of gospelization by voice and pen and press; by exhortation, instruction, correspondence, and the dissemination of books and tracts, and the angel-thoughts of the best and ablest disciples of the Holy and Just One; and if he be wisely abstemious and prudently active ere the sun is up, and, except when mercy commands it, avoids the path of the malaria and the walk of the pestilence, he may, with God's help and furthering, be as effective here as anywhere, in Calcutta as in Boston. My experience of nearly nine years is, that I can do double the work here that I could in Toronto, C.W.; where, as you know, I made several years' trial of it before coming to India. Here no time is lost in kindling fires, or in thawing one's ink or his fingers; and as the winter's sleep of trees and plants is unknown, and all greens here are evergreens, so I find the tendency of the human plant is to a minimum of sleep and a maximum of activity. This mail will bring you a lecture of ours on the "Elements of Life," just now printed by friends of Christian truth in Burdwan; among whom are strongly enthusiastic men, who favor the efforts we are making for the introduction of the gospel into India. Last week, some fifteen hundred or more copies of a letter of ours were scattered over India in the columns of the "Bengal Hurkaru," the oldest newspaper in the country. This letter briefly embodied a protest against the *literal* acceptance of the popular Christian theory of demoniac agency; and was, substantially, a publication of the views — quite new and heretical in this part of the world — which were given us at the Divinity School in Cambridge, by our excellent "Dean" Palfrey, twenty-five years ago. It was called out by a sermon, at the "Independent" chapel here, on the two thousand devils thrown by Jesus (?) into the swine and out of the man of Gadara. We continue to owe much

to the newspaper press of Calcutta, which from the first has been with our mission, and has distributed, promptly and without cost to us, probably not less than a million pages.

I am watching for the day when I can take a trip of a thousand miles in a new direction: I mean, along the east coast cities of the Bay of Bengal. We have points of light, and centres of distribution, both at Maulmain and Rangoon. God will help us to do our part in the wonderful spiritual and mental awakening that is now coming over a territory around us nearly as extensive as Europe, and which is already accessible to us by English postal establishments at a nominal fee. A few days ago, I received a letter from Maulmain, from an aged friend and co-laborer, — G. H. Hough, Esq. You will remember him as a coadjutor of Mr. Adam in 1825, some forty years ago! I am of course fulfilling, as I may, his request for "reports, periodicals, or newspapers, printed in America or elsewhere, on Liberal Christianity." He is ready to bear all costs of transmission, and lifts ever to God the prayers of a Simeon for the progress of truth by our labors. In view of what Mr. Hough has done during several years past, I seem to hear, in his voice, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man." Such voice should avail with us, and stir us heart and hand. I have left myself hardly room to say that I am in correspondence with Secunderabad (in Central Southern India), — the only post named in my original instructions from the American Unitarian Association, which, from distance and cost, I have not yet visited. Some nineteen souls belong to our little struggling church there; the sabbath services being kept up by a native "*Elisha*." Eight of the nineteen are of his own family. Our press, as yet, utters no voice; but it will do us good service by and by. Pray for us, and your favored brother

DALL.

P. S. — The hideous and frightfully low manifestations of the "religious sentiment" in parts of India away from the sea-board, and from her very few high-roads, must strike you "as idle tales." Still, they remain fearfully and horribly true. Human sacrifices continue. Widow-burning goes on. The Thugs are still on their errands of death; and what say they of hook-swinging? "We hear, that, in West Berat, the *Churruck* was lately held with great *éclat*. A greater number of men than usual were on the hooks, and swinging with intense enthusiasm. More than is common were seen exhibiting themselves with bored tongues, or bristling with long pins inserted in their backs, or with rods thrust through their bodies in various ways. The reason given for this is, that last year a man was punished by the local authorities for cutting and wounding himself; but, on appeal, he was released; and orders were sent that there should be no interference with this mode of celebrating a religious festival. The people this year are showing their appreciation of this order by a more than usual degree and number of mutilations and barbarities." — *Englishman*, May 7.

It may interest you to know, that, on my asking my school as to their belief in the *transmigration of souls*, — an orthodox Hindoo doctrine, — the vote stood: believers, 13; disbelievers of it, 199. *Many* said, "only the *ignorant* believed in it."

"A SECT which has true life will seize by instinct the emblems and rites which are in accordance with itself; and, without life, it will only find in borrowed rites its winding-sheet." — *Channing.*

MODERN ECCLESIASTICISM IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

Every church, if it has any organization, must have its methods and rules of working, — its rules for admitting and dismissing members, of discussion and voting, of trials and discipline. It should, however, be careful, in framing these methods, to aim not only at expediency, but also at the embodiment of truth and justice. It ought not to establish anti-Christian rules, however convenient they may be in preventing annoyance. For thus, by chance, they may themselves be changed from a Christian to a Pagan institution; becoming, not a church of Jesus Christ, but of Jupiter Tonans.

We have read with much interest a full (stenographic?) report of the doings of the Congregational Council assembled to "recognize" three Congregational churches in Philadelphia, and to ordain the pastor of one of them, — Dr. Smiley. This report is contained in the "Independent" of June 9.

Two features of this Council we decidedly approve, — one, its being held in open session; some hundred and fifty gentlemen and ladies being present: the other is its being fully reported, without abatement or disguise.

The first question which came up was concerning —

WOMEN VOTING IN CHURCH.

This discussion, it seems to us, is very interesting and important. The state of opinion and feeling disclosed by it is, however, strange and unsatisfactory. It seems, that, by the rules of the First Church in Philadelphia, men vote at the age of twenty-one, and women at eighteen,

— the legal age respectively. The article reads, "All members of the church, of lawful age, shall be entitled to vote on all questions before the church."

This article, being read, gave rise to much discussion. It was thought by most of the ministers and delegates to be a bad and dangerous innovation. Dr. Todd, of Pittsfield, said it was not the custom for the female members of churches to vote, and he thought they had better not. Mr. Gulliver, of Norwich, Conn., was formerly in favor of their voting, but now disapproves of it. Dr. Thompson, of the Broadway Tabernacle Church, thought it not only inexpedient, but contrary to the New Testament. The only persons who were in favor of the article and of women's voting were Mr. Bowen, of Plymouth Church (H. W. Beecher's), who said, that, for six or eight years, women had voted in that church, and all the members were in favor of it; and Dr. Ritter, delegate from Dr. Thompson's church, who differed from his pastor, and thought women ought to vote.

No reason was given by those opposed to woman's voting, except this, — that women are naturally excitable, and would not vote with proper judgment. It was inexpedient. Dr. Thompson, indeed, fell back on St. Paul, and the difference of the sexes.

It would seem that the burden of proof in this matter lies with those who think that women ought not to vote. "Inexpedient," "injudicious," &c., are not reasons. "The ladies would rather not vote" is not a reason. People often *ought* to do what they had rather not do. We find fault with the upper classes for not going to the polls, and leaving the Government in the hands of a mob. So, if women do not wish to vote, this may be a fault, and not a merit.

Since St. Paul is referred to, it might be well to look at

the passage (Gal. iii. 28) in which he teaches that the distinctions of Jew and Greek, bond and free, *male and female*, are abolished in Christianity.

Women are members of the Church, or they are not. If they are members of the Church, and can partake of the Lord's Supper as church-members, why cannot they act as church-members, work as church-members, and give their power and faculties to the cause of their Master by discussion and voting also? What right have we to lay on the shelf any power of thought, conscience, will, which is in the heart of Christian women. If women had voted and debated in the Church, would slavery have continued till now? Possibly it might; but possibly, also, the great instinct of justice and love in woman might long since have abated it.

To which Dr. Todd replies, "Let them influence their husbands and brothers in some other way, as they certainly will, than by voting." It is no reason for depriving a person of his direct powers, to say that he has indirect ways of accomplishing his objects. If the Massachusetts Legislature should pass a law that no clergyman should vote at the polls, would it be a sufficient defence of that act to say, "Oh! they have indirect influence: they can persuade other people to vote as they wish. Besides, they prefer not to vote: they had rather not take the trouble. The polls are dirty places: they will soil their shoes by going to them"?

To us it seems simply a part of the old contempt for women as "the weaker vessel" which maintains such indefensible distinctions as these.

The discussion on this point was closed thus: —

"Rev. D. L. Gear, pastor of the First Congregational Church. — I wish to say to the Council, that the church is not at all tenacious with reference to this provision. It seemed to

be a necessity at the organization of the church; but, as the church grows, it will correct itself. The female members of the church would rather be excused from voting than to vote.

"Dr. TODD made a motion, which, being seconded, was adopted, that the Council should earnestly recommend this church to insert the word 'male' before 'members' in the phrase, 'All members of the church, of lawful age,'" &c.

The next point noticed was the ground of excommunication.

"Mr. GULLIVER. — Another provision in the rules of that church states that no person shall be excluded from its membership, except for a crime manifestly forbidden in the word of God. Now, an offender will construe it, and insist upon its being construed, very liberally. It will be extremely difficult in many cases, under that rule, to convict an individual of an offence that should exclude him from the church, even though the offence may be such as to destroy entirely the evidence of his Christian character. I should very much prefer a rule like this: No person shall be excluded from membership in the church, except for an offence which manifestly destroys the evidence of his Christian character.

"Dr. TODD. — It should be borne in mind, that the church, and not the culprit, is to judge of whether an offence is forbidden by the word of God or not. I do not think there will be any difficulty such as Brother Gulliver apprehends.

"Mr. GULLIVER. — It is not a matter of very great consequence; but I have known a case where the offender distinctly affirmed that his course of conduct was not forbidden by the word of God, and that therefore he was not subject to the discipline of the church. It made a great deal of trouble.

"THE MODERATOR. — Those brethren who are conversant with ancient records of church discipline will find that always the custom was, when a person was charged with any offence, to point out the commandment, the precept, the part of the word of God, which he had offended against. It was considered indispensable."

The Moderator (Dr. Bacon, of New Haven) seemed the only one who considered what was due to the supposed offender. If excommunication from a church is a penalty, involving suffering, it should not be administered except under all possible safeguards for the rights of the accused person. That "it makes a good deal of trouble" not to be able to excommunicate a man on general grounds, is no doubt true. It would be easier, certainly, if the church was not obliged to specify a particular offence. But what a gross injustice to a man to punish him on such vague and general grounds! The Bible is pretty explicit in pointing out and enumerating offences. If you wish to excommunicate a brother for an offence which is nowhere named in the Bible, you may be almost sure that he has done nothing which deserves excommunication.

OUGHT THE CHURCH TO BE A MOUSE-TRAP?

This was the next subject of discussion, *apropos* of an article which required a person leaving a church to report within a year, or return the letter.

Mr. Farnsworth (delegate from the Park-street Church, Boston) held that the church was a mouse-trap. "Once in," he says, "you cannot get out, except by death or excommunication." We should like to ask whether that is stated to those applying for admission: if it is, *they*, at least, have no right to complain. Is it frankly and honorably said to them? — "Understand now, that, once in our church, you can never get out but by committing suicide, or committing some offence deserving excommunication. You may not be edified by our services; you may change your opinions, and become a Roman Catholic, a Unitarian, a Universalist, a Baptist, a Swedenborgian, a Quaker; you may feel that some of the rules of the church are

wrong, or its practices unchristian. In such cases, you cannot quietly withdraw. No: you must die, or be turned out publicly as an offender against Christ. Your fault may not be named: it may be said only, that you have violated your covenant vows. No one will know but you have stolen, or became a drunkard or an atheist. You may be a modest girl, or the mother of a household, averse to all notoriety. No exit for you but by this public disgraceful excommunication." If all this is fairly told to those who are joining a church, very well: otherwise we must say, *pace* Mr. Farnsworth; that they are not *admitted* into the church, but *caught* in it.

Others, however, differing from Mr. Farnsworth, wished for "a back-door." They did not wish their church to be a mouse-trap. Dr. Thompson was one of these.

"Dr. FARNSWORTH. — As I look upon it, there is a great difficulty here. That rule admits of a sliding out of the church, which I suppose is contrary to our notions. When a person enters the church, and assumes the obligations which this act implies, *the idea is, that he cannot get out except by death or excommunication;* but it would be very convenient for many persons to take a letter from this church or that, and keep it in their pocket until the expiration of a given period, when, according to the rules of the organization, they will no longer be members of any religious body, and so slide out without having any odium attached to them as having renounced their profession of religion. It strikes me that this is a pretty serious question.

"Dr. THOMPSON. — This rule, in its practical workings, seems to be misapprehended by some of our brethren. It is only one of some half a dozen expedients that are resorted to for the remedy of an evil that exists, to a greater or less extent, in all our churches, and especially in those in great cities, in order that they may keep their catalogues tolerably clear, and their membership tolerably pure. So far as the question of having unworthy members slipping out is concerned, it is a mat-

ter of unspeakable relief for any church to get rid of them, even in that way. If you do not get rid of them by this method, how are you going to do it? for, in the majority of cases, there are no overt acts that they have committed, on the ground of which you can arraign them for discipline. When a person comes forward, and asks for a letter of dismission, he is presumed to do it in good faith, with a view to uniting with another church. If, however, he wilfully neglects to do that, he may, from year to year, be walking disorderly, and the church from which he has taken the letter may have no knowledge whatever of the fact. Now, as I understand it, it is to guard against the scandal that might be brought upon it by the conduct of such persons, that this church has introduced into its rules the provision, that any member, who, having taken a letter of dismission, does not within one year give notice of his connection with some other church, or return the letter, shall, at the expiration of that time, be cut off from the fellowship of his brethren. This plan of disposing of unworthy members is called, in the old books, 'the lesser excommunication.'

"Mr. FARNSWORTH. — It is a plan that the unworthy member often takes advantage of to break away from the church.

"Dr. THOMPSON. — *Well, if he wants to break away, let him go.*"

So also Dr. Todd: —

"Dr. TODD. — I rather like that rule. I have, for a long time, wanted a back-door to let delinquent members through. I am the pastor of a great church, that emigrates all over the country. It is largely made up of operatives. They come in by scores; and, the first I know, they are off, and I cannot find them. At one time, there were nearly three hundred members of my church that nobody could find. The other day, I received a modest application for a letter of dismission from a woman who absented herself from my church, got married, changed her name, and lived thirty-five years within six miles of me without my knowing it. When I came to inquire about the good sister, everybody had forgotten her. Nobody could tell me any thing about her; and so I recommended her to begin anew. This evil

of being obliged to keep delinquent members in the church is one which I have tried in vain to remedy. I like this rule which provides for having done with them. If church-membership is not worth to a person the trouble of sending back to his brethren a letter of dismission which he concludes not to use, and if he does not regard his vows enough to acquaint himself with the rules of the church, and live up to them, he is good for nothing, and there is no use in trying to make any thing of him. I should like to have a rule in my church like this. I think I must introduce it."

After this came the examination of the candidate, Dr. Smiley, as to his theology and religious experience; of which we may perhaps make another article hereafter.

"APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA."

BY JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D.D.

This book is a reply to a pamphlet by Prof. Kingsley, entitled, "What, then, does Dr. Newman mean?" Kingsley's pamphlet, which we have not seen, seems to have charged him with Jesuitical reticences and pretences in former days and now. But the personal controversy is not worth noticing. The part of Dr. Newman's book which is really of value is a *naïve* account of the gradual progress of his mind from Canterbury to Rome, and a history of the "Movement" in the Church of England, since called Puseyism. As a *memoire pour servir* to the history of opinion, this autobiography has a special interest and charm. Dr. Newman is entirely honest and open, — as honest as perfect narrowness can make a man.

Dr. Newman started in life as a Churchman, — believing two things: viz., that the object of existence is to save

one's soul from the wrath of God by becoming *religious;* secondly, that "religion" is only possible by means of "a church." He is saturated through and through with the longing for an outward authority, a visible master; something wiser than truth, better than goodness. This desire, which has been at the root of all the idolatry of the world, — this longing for a visible embodiment of invisible truth, — took him on, step by step, till it landed him, by a logical necessity, in the Church of Rome.

Dr. Newman is one of those men who so love to be ordered, that, if any one *claims* authority, this claim is already half a proof of his having it.

In all this account of his journey to Rome, he says not a word of Romanism being in accordance with the life and teaching of CHRIST: he nowhere refers to Christ's authority to decide this question. He scarcely mentions the New Testament or its teachings in regard to the claims of Rome. A single sentence from Leo the Great is almost enough to convince him; a phrase of Athanasius or Augustine sweeps him half way to the Pope. But no passage from the Epistles of Paul, no words of James or John, nothing from the Gospels, is quoted either *pro* or *con.*

Again: one would suppose, that, in settling such a question as this, the history of the Church itself might be referred to as an important witness. Not at all. Has the Roman Church contributed to make the countries it governs more intelligent, more refined, more virtuous? Has it promoted or retarded civilization? Are Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Mexico more or less Christian than Scotland, Prussia, and New England? Of such tests as these, not a word in the book.

It seems that Dr. Newman started in his Anglican faith with three ideas, two of which he still holds as a Catholic.

They are these: 1. The principle of dogma, as opposed to Liberalism. "From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion. I cannot enter into the idea of any other religion. Religion, as a sentiment, is to me a dream and mockery. . . . What I held in 1816, I held in 1833, and I hold in 1864."

2. "A visible church, with sacraments and rites which are the channels of invisible grace. . . . Here, again, I am not changed in opinion. . . . I appealed to the Ordination service, in which the bishop says, 'Receive the Holy Ghost;' to the Visitation service, which teaches confession and absolution; to the Baptismal service, in which the priest speaks of the child after baptism as regenerate," &c.

3. Formerly, his third idea was, that the Church of Rome, though Catholic, was not apostolic; that the Church of England was apostolic, but not Catholic. Still, he thought the Calvinists and Lutherans far worse heretics than the Roman Catholics. He struggled to find some reason for not being a Roman Catholic; believing as he did in all their leading ideas. The principal offence of Rome, he thought (when a tractarian), was "her worship of the Virgin and saints."

No wonder, then, that Newman became a Roman Catholic.

From this book, it seems that the motive of the Puseyite movement in the English Church was to oppose "Liberalism." "Liberalism" means, in their language, opposition to positive established dogma. To this class of minds, represented by Dr. Newman, dogma, external doctrine, immutably fixed in the conviction of the Church, is the anchor, without which the ship drifts to perdition. Of those vital truths underlying dogma, those insights of

which dogma is only the husk and shell, these good souls know nothing. So the garden-plants, which have always been watered at fixed hours by the gardener out of his watering-pot, might come to trust in the fixed hours, in the gardener and his pot, identifying and confusing the water with all these external media. That the same essential and divine nutriment may come to them by the blessed rain, the nightly dews, the moisture invisible in the air sucked in by the pores of the leaf, the humor of the ground absorbed by delicate rootlets, — of all this the dear flower knows nothing. It thinks its life bound up in that watering-pot and those regularly recurrent visits of the sacramental gardener. Talk to it of invisible aqueous vapor, and it responds, "That is sentimentalism, mysticism, German transcendentalism. I know nothing of it. My life depends on the visits of the gardener." And if the simple plant could get itself transplanted into some ancient garden, where the rules were *very* positive and the gardeners *very* regular, so that it might depend still more certainly on these libations from the matinal and vespertine watering-pot, no doubt it would say, "Now I enjoy perfect peace. Now I am at rest. I have no more anxiety, no more doubt. Come into our garden, outside of which is no aqueous salvation for geranium or rose."

This illustrates sufficiently the biography of such minds as Newman's in England and America, and shows why and how they go to Rome.

☞ The report of the August meeting of the Executive Committee is omitted for want of room, and will appear in the next number.

INTELLIGENCE.

Rev. JOHN B. GREEN was installed as pastor of the society in Leominster, Mass., on Wednesday, Aug. 3. The order of exercises was as follows: Introductory prayer, by Rev. Edwin C. L. Brown, of Bolton; reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. Edwin J. Gerry, of Boston; sermon, by Rev. George Putnam, D.D., of Roxbury; prayer of installation, by Rev. George M. Bartol, of Lancaster; charge, by Rev. Joseph Allen, D.D., of Northborough; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. Henry H. Barber, of Harvard; concluding prayer, by Rev. A. W. Stevens, of Manchester, N.H.; benediction, by the pastor.

Rev. SAMUEL B. CRUFT has accepted an invitation to take the pastoral charge of Gospel Church, Longwood, Mass., until January.

Rev. THOMAS W. BROWN has accepted the call from the society in Sandwich, Mass.

Rev. H. P. CUTTING, of Stowe, Vt., has accepted a call from the new Unitarian society in Winona, Minn.

Rev. MILTON J. MILLER, of Troy, O., has been appointed chaplain of the One Hundred and Tenth Regiment Ohio Infantry.

Rev. NATHANIEL O. CHAFFEE has received an invitation to take charge of the society in West Bridgewater, Mass.

Rev. EDWARD I. GALVIN, of Brookfield, Mass., who went out as lieutenant in the Forty-second Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, has been unanimously elected chaplain of that regiment, and has accepted the position.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

1864.			
Aug. 1.	From Rev. S. B. Stewart, as an annual membership,		$1.00
„ 5.	„	Asa Fowler, as an annual membership . . .	1.00
„ 10.	„	Horace H. Soule, to make himself a life-member	30.00
„ 15.	„	Society in Bridgewater, for Monthly Journals,	23.00
„ 17.	„	Society in Montreal, Canada, for Monthly Journals	50.00
„ 20.	„	Society in Harvard, for Monthly Journals . .	6.00
„ 22.	„	Rev. A. G. Hibbard, to make himself an annual member	2.00